THE PASTIME.

(A LITERARY PAPER.)

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ORIGINAL PAPERS.

For the Pastime.

THE PURVEYOR.—No. I.

Sit mihi fas audita loqui : sit numine vestro
Pandere res altâ terrâ et caligine mersas.

VIRG.

WHENEVER an author intrudes his lucubrations upon the public, his pedigree and private life, are naturally the first objects of enquiry. *Who is he? what is he?* and *where does he live?* are commonly questions to be solved, before an unequivocal opinion is given of the merit of his labours. On this occasion, however, I shall shelter myself under the motto of Junius,

STAT NOMINIS UMBRA.

No further intelligence will be given than my numbers disclose, and the nature of the name I have assumed, shall indicate.

In the early ages of feudal simplicity, it was customary to support the royal household by specific renders of corn and other provisions, from the tenants of the King's demesnes. But when the court removed from one part of the kingdom to another, *Purveyors* were sent beforehand to furnish viands at an appraised valuation for the royal use. This soon became an office of intolerable exaction, and in later ages, liberty has plucked this flower of the prerogative from the British crown. No such office exists in America; and the author of the present series has had the presumption to assume the title of Purveyor—not as a providing precursor for a royal sovereign, but with the humble hope of affording his readers a simple, but salutary intellectual repast. If he cannot allure them with the prospect of a rich and delicious feast, yet he flatters himself that he will always be able to present them with the substantial comforts of the staff of life. A plain dish is generally preferred to a garnished banquet, by those whose taste is not sated by a surfeit of classical elegance, nor deadened by the fripperies of modern verbosity.

Among the many difficulties which surround the periodical writer, none is perhaps more insuperable than the *love of novelty*. But novelty at this late age of the world cannot be reasonably anticipated. The ground naturally marked out for the essayist has been so often trodden, that scarce a vestige of verdure remains for future gathering. In the vast variety of productions which daily fall from the press, it would not perhaps be hazardous to assert that scarcely two ideas upon any abstract subject are published in a year which are new to the world. Yet experience evinces that the most interesting subject when continually sounding in our ears, loses its efficacy to excite or alarm. The mind becomes tired with the frequency of repetition, and seeks for enjoyment in the pleasures of novelty. But to gratify that pleasure—to realize that

expectation, is beyond the author's vanity to hope. His greatest consolation rests upon the reflection on human frailty, that

"We need be oft reminded of the things we know."

Under this painful, but necessary impression, the Purveyor will endeavour to present old ideas in a new and comely dress, which shall neither disgust the reader by its oddity of form, nor coarseness of texture.

And while we lament this passion for *novelty* so universally prevalent, a brief enquiry into its causes and effects will very naturally solicit our attention.

An inexperienced philosopher would be ready to believe that the oftener a truth was inculcated, the more lasting would be the impression, and the surer the effect. History and experience concur in refuting the doctrine. How important soever the truth which is taught, unless decked in the charms of novelty, we soon become inattentive, and perhaps disgusted with satiety. We gaze with admiration on the lofty mansion which art has erected, but neglect the venerable and more beautiful elm which stands by its side. The surpliced Bishop, the powdered Statesman, and the bedizened Earl, are viewed with more awe by a foreign potentate, than by the maid who plaits their garments, or by the servant who drives their coach.

When we search for the causes of these singular operations of novelty upon our minds, we must "look back through nature, unto nature's God." The great giver of all our faculties has intermingled this with the other qualifications with which he has endowed us. Nor has it been done merely to exhibit the extent of his power, but also the munificence of his goodness. At the same time that it brings pleasure in its train, it furnishes evidence of a truth which is dearer to the Christian, than any temporal enjoyment.

The wise Director of all our ways has been pleased to unveil to our perceptions the certainty of an hereafter in the volume of inspiration. But subsidiary to that great, eternal developement of his purposes, he has added innumerable collateral proofs, to which the caviller may object, but which he cannot withstand. One of the most prominent of these is the love of novelty. By referring to the operations of our own minds, we discover that we are perpetually grasping at something beyond our reach. Extending the hand of expectancy we often lay hold on disappointment, but ardour is kindled by hope, and perseverance is cherished by desire. Looking beyond the present, unsatisfied with the past, and charmed with the prospect of the future, we enlarge our views beyond the veil of life and pant for immortality. It is this which animates the soul in the lowest state of despondency, casts a cheering beam over the dark shades of life, and gives peace and consolation when all terrestrial comfort is dried at the fountain.

For the Pastime.

FORCE OF EARLY EDUCATION AND PREJUDICE.

Naturally benevolent, man sympathises in the joy and distress of his fellow-creatures. His soul expands at the appearance of their happiness; he "seeks them in their sufferings, relieves them in their wants." Such must have been his primitive situation, till dire necessity, that foe to virtue, stimulated him to look for the alleviation of his miseries in the invasion of others' rights. The barrier once overleaped, he could no longer indulge the idea of perfect virtue. The consciousness of having done wrong, haunted his imagination; and now, wretched from another cause, he vainly imagined he might ensure his happiness, from a continuance of that encroachment, which he once felt had lightened the burthen of a former calamity. Hence, the original of in-

culcating ideas, which, in a state of nature, perhaps, he would never have entertained. Hence, the custom of implanting in the infant breast, among other things, the arbitrary principles of superstition, from which, growing with our growth, and strengthening with our strength, we are seldom able to divest ourselves. Every parent, fixed them in the soft, yielding mind of his offspring. These notions, sometimes inculcated from necessity, often from caprice, became hereditary. Even so much is mankind the creature of education in this respect, that, when placed by force, and address, beyond the reach of civil power, he lived,

"unrestrain'd by law,
"Till superstition taught the tyrant awe,
"Who, from the rending earth, and bursting skies,
"Saw Gods descend, and fiends infernal rise;
"Fix'd here the dreadful, there the blest abodes,
"Fear made her devils, and weak hope her Gods."

To draw an instance nearer home, who, that in the cradle has been menaced by the bugbear, or by the side of a winter's fire has listened with open ears and mouth, to the nurses tale of the pale ghost, but, at this day, when passing a lonely churchyard, in spite of the reason which has taught him to despise such fear as puerile, will seem to hear

"The noise of something purring a this heels,"

and startle at a fancied glimpse of the shrouded apparition. He may indeed persuade himself that it is not the fear which formerly made him dread the darkness of midnight, or the horrors of sleeping alone, which brings the history to recollection; but yet so strong is the force of education, that should the breeze break in upon the silence of midnight, by moving the light leaves, imagination nursed by superstition, will represent it as the drapery of the spectre, and she will be involuntarily turned to the spot, before reason can be roused into action. Though the force of reason, has at this day, generally exploded this terrific system of instruction, yet, even now, the traces of it are to be found. In many parts of New-England, the heir of his father's property still inherits his superstition, and, aided by imagination, he discovers the airy witch, mounted fierce on broom, gliding with incredible velocity through the regions of space, or perceives the merry group, after preparing the herbage which these famous botanists gather,

"When nights dark mantle overspreads the sky,"

assembled in the distant mead, where by the light of willowisp,

"They nimbly, nimbly trip it still,
"To the echo of some hollow hill."

Nor is slavish fear the only principle which the mind imbibes by education, and early prejudice. The reverse is instanced in the hero, whose soul, animated by the history of great atchievments, "seeks the bubble reputation even in the cannon's mouth;" nor will he shrink from the destruction which its yawning throat portends, but "cross it, though it blast him." The pilfering pick-pocket, trained among low souls, who fear not dishonor, disdains no meanness; while the bold highwayman, punctiliously nice, supports one honorable principle by the destruction of another. A comic English author, strongly illustrates the latter character, putting various conjectures into the mouth of a landlord, who concludes them all with the idea that his lodger "*must be a highwayman, the fellow's so generous.*" What but the strength of early prejudice, could have so impressed the high sense of duty on the Peruvian Monarch, when, broiling on coals, he uttered the heroic reproach to his flinching minister, "Fellow, think'st thou *I* lie on a bed of roses." What makes the proud Castilian so delicate on the point of honor, that his deeds are done in the broad face

of day, and he nobly measures his sword with his adversary, to gratify his dear passion revenge ;——while the vile Galician, born under the same atmosphere, points his stiletto with poison, and lurking like a viper, watches the unwary steps of his adversary, or in silent stealthy tread, "with Tarquin's ravishing strides," comes behind, and stabs him—when perhaps his fond fancy is drawing the tender scene of meeting with a beloved partner, and his imagination, already embraces his prattling infants—such ideas have been blotted from the assassins breast, or, at least, he has never learnt to respect them in others.

Nature, in the physical organization of the frame of man, has given to one more ardour, more native energy, than to another. The early direction of this ardour, whether stronger, or weaker, determines him virtuous or vicious.——Passion, the *mobile* of action, like an unrestrained stream, will follow any propensity, and rolling down a declivity, will separate itself in various parts, from every little obstruction or inequality of ground, till it loses its power, and vainly and uselessly spends itself. Not so when confined within a rocky bank, its torrent obstructed by a dam, and its whole force directed to a particular outlet. Then, its strength can move the machinery of a mill, and a whole nation be fed by its labours. Some passions, however, may be so divided, as to gather force from expansion, like the Nile, they water and fertilize the ground through which they pass; but fatal seems to have been the effect, when one has swallowed up the rest. Its progress, then incontroulable, becomes irresistably pernicious. How little did it matter to Cæsar or Alexander that the plains of Pharsalia should be manured with the richest blood of Rome, or the streams of the extensive east should run purple from the veins of inoffensive Africans. Cato, to his enthusiastic *amor patriæ*, sacrificed that life which if prolonged, might have softened the slavery of those countrymen who survived him—and my uncle Toby (peace to his gentle manes !) would have spent his whole fortune on his darling fortifications, and have felt no wish unsatisfied, while he had the approbation of his faithful Corporal Trim ! So unruly and restive is the hobby horse, if not early taught to bear the bit, that, to renew my water simile, it unites all the energies of the passions,

"As, when an hundred streams explore their way,
"Down the same slope convolving to the sea,
"They boil, they bend, they urge their force amain,
"Swell o'er th' obstructing crags, and sweep the distant plain."

ORIGINAL LETTER OF GEN. LEE'S.

For the Pastime.

[It is well known that the late Gen. LEE was slovenly and careless in his dress. The beautiful and witty Miss FRANKS, laughing with some of his officers at the General's appearance, asserted that he wore green breeches, patched with leather. This was told to the General, who immediately sent the following sportive letter to Miss FRANKS, accompanied by a pair of breeches.]

MADAM,

WHEN an Officer of the respectable rank which I bear, is grossly traduced and calumniated, it is incumbent on him to clear up the affair to the world with as little delay as possible. The spirit of defamation and calumny (I am sorry to say it) is grown to a prodigious and intolerable height on the continent. If you had accused me of a design to procrastinate the war, or of holding a treasonable correspondence with the enemy, I could have borne it ;—this I am used to, and this happened to the great Fabius Maximus. If you had accused me of getting drunk as often as I could get liquor, (as two Alexanders the Great* have been charged with

* Alexander Lord Sterling.

this vice,) I should perhaps have sat patient under the imputation. Or even if you had given the plainest hints that I had stolen the soldiers' shirts, this I could have put up with, as the Great Duke of Marlborough would have been an example. Or if you had contented yourself with asserting that I was so abominable a sloven as never to part with my shirt until my shirt parted with me, the anecdotes of my illustrious namesake of Sweden, would have administered some comfort to me: But the calumny you have in the fertility of your malicious wit chosen to invent, is of so new, so unprecedented, and so Hellish a kind, as would make Job himself swear and blaspheme like a Virginia Colonel. Is it possible that the celebrated Miss Franks, a lady who has had every human and divine advantage, who has read (or at least might have read) in their originals† the New and Old Testament, (tho' I am afraid she too seldom looks into the translations)—I say, is it possible that Miss Franks with those advantages, and who might or ought to have read those two good books which an old Welch nurse, whose uncle was reckoned the best preacher in all Mersonithshire, assured me enjoin charity and denounce vengeance against slander and evil speaking: Is it possible I again repeat that Miss Franks should in the face of day, carry her malignity so far, as in the presence of three most respectable personages (one of them of the oldest religion‡ in the world, one of the newest, for he is a New-Light Man,§ and the other most probably of none at all, as he is an English Sailor)—I demand it again and again, is it possible that Miss Franks should assert in the presence of those respectable personages, that General Lee wore green breeches patched with leather! To convict you therefore, of the falsehood of this most diabolical scandal, to put you to eternal silence (if you are not past all grace) and to cover you with a much larger patch of infamy than you have wantonly endeavoured to fix on my breeches, I have thought proper by the advice of three very grave friends, Lawyers and Members of Congress, (accounted excellent judges of the delicate point of honor,) to send you the said breeches; and with the consciousness of truth on my side, to submit them to the most severe inspection and scrutiny of you and all those who may have entered into this wicked cabal against my honor and reputation. I say, I dare you and your whole junto to do your worst. Turn 'em! Examine 'em! inside and outside, and if you find them to be green breeches patched with leather, and not actual and legitimate Cherry Vallise, such as his Majesty of Poland wears, (who let me tell you is a man that has set more fashions than all the Knights of the Mischeanza put together, notwithstanding they are Beauties) I repeat (altho' I am almost out of breath with repetitions and parenthesis) that if these are proved to be patched green breeches and not legitimate Cherry Vallise, which a man of the first bon-ton might be proud of, I will submit in silence to all the scurrility which I have no doubt, you and your abettors are preparing to issue against me in the public papers, upon this important and interesting occasion: but Madame "my reputation" (as Common Sense very *sensibly*, tho' not very *uncommonly* observes) "is a very serious thing:" You have already injured me in the tenderest point. I demand satisfaction; and as you cannot be ignorant of the laws of duelling, I insist upon the privilege of the injured party who is to have his hour and weapons, and as I intend it to be a very serious affair, I will not admit of any seconds, and you may depend upon it, Miss Franks, that whatever may be your spirit and vigour, the world shall never accuse

† Being a Jewess.
‡ Miss Levi.
§ Mr. Edwards, his Aid.

General Lee of having *turned his back on you.*

In the mean time,
I am, &c. &c.
CHARLES LEE.

[A work has been recently published in Paris, entitled *The Dictionary of Love.* One of the latest French Journals contain some extracts from it, which we have translated for the entertainment of our readers. The Editor of *Journal du Commerce, Litterature, et Politique,* a man of talents and learning, speaks of this publication in the following terms :

We are not always happy in choosing secretaries. There are good, and there are very wretched ones. But Love is a connoisseur: he has made an excellent choice for the compilation of his dictionary, and it is very evident that the author is in his confidence. The reader may open this ingenious work at any page, and he will be sure of finding something pretty. It has but one fault—it is not long enough.]

For the Pastime.

TRANSLATED EXTRACTS FROM
THE DICTIONARY OF LOVE.

ABOMINABLE.—Synonymous with *deceiver, infidel, perfidious.* When a lady says of any one, *he is an abominable man,* one may infer, without malice, that he has not always been such to her eyes.

CIVILITIES.—The light troops of love.

COUCHES.—What a pity they do not speak! They would tell such pretty things!

CANDOUR.—As delicate as the rose, and nothing can blast it.

CHAIN.—Of flowers, when one is loved; of iron, when one is not.

COMPOSURE.—With the greater part of women, the exterior is composed, while the interior is disturbed.

CONSTANCY—Constancy is the virtue of women. They *always* love. The only difference is in the object.

DATE.—This *Love* dates from far. It is good French, but little used.

DRESS.—A woman's dress is commonly the Mirror of her soul, the Thermometer of her virtue.

EXCHANGE.—The most flourishing part of the commerce of love.

FIRST FRUITS.—Lovers are delicate as the Gods. They love first fruits.

INNOCENCE.—

D'une plante étrangére auriez-vous connaisance ?
Nèe au lever du jour, flétrie à son coucher :
Comme la sensitive, elle cède au toucher;
Un souffle la detruit.—On l'appele innocence.

Would you know something about a strange plant ?
Born at the rising of the sun, faded at its setting,
Like the sensitive, she yields to the touch ;
A breath destroys her. They call her INNOCENCE.

INSURANCE.—If there was, for love, an insurance company, he would soon be ruined.

NONENTITY.—Indifference is the nonentity of the soul. Love is the life of it.

NEUTRAL.—Love knows no neutrals. He is continually at war with the whole world.

ORNAMENT.—Modesty is the greatest ornament of beauty. It will never change with fashions.

PURIFY.—Constancy is the crucible of love. It is there it purifies itself. But alchymy is a science so difficult!

SHOW.—My principles, my virtue, my fidelity, my oaths, my constancy, all this merchandize is commonly nothing but SHOW.

VARIETY.

A striking instance of Longevity.

In days of yore, a gentleman travelling through the Highlands of Scotland, happened to fall in with a man who appeared to be about *eighty* years of age, weeping bitterly : On inquiring the reason, the old man informed him that his *father* had just been whipping him—the gentleman's curiosity led him to visit their cottage, where he saw the father, and on expostulating with him on his cruelty in using thus his son, was told, that the *young*

rascal had been throwing stones at his *grandfather*, who was at work in the garden.

—

A Gentleman going into the Coffee-Room at the Castle and Falcon Inn, found it beautifying, and the following *English* notice posted on the door. "This Coffee-Room removed up stairs for the present."

—

EPIGRAM

On a stone being thrown at the head of a great man, which missed him.

BY PETER PINDAR.

Talk no more of the lucky escape of the HEAD,
From a flint so unluckily thrown.
I think very different, with thousands indeed,
'Twas a lucky escape for the STONE.

—

French Anagram.

A very singular anagram has been discovered in the words *Revolution Française*, (French Revolution.)—First take the word VETO from *Revolution Française*, and the remaining letters, properly united, will form this phrase: UN CORSE LA FINIRA *(a Corsican shall finish it.)*

—

THE TURTLE AND THE TRAVELLER.

Trav. Why, with your wailings do these groves resound?
Tur. My mate, my Turtle's no where to be found!
Why, thro' these solitudes choose *you* to roam!
Trav. Because *my* Turtle's to be found at home!

—

The time for wits to play the fool, is when they are met together to relax from the severity of mental exertion. Their follies have a degree of extravagance much beyond the phlegmatic merriment of sober dulness.

—

EPITAPH,

BY A DUTCHMAN, ON HIS WIFE.

Here lays mine whife, Got thanked be,
She always used to scholt at me;
Chentle Reader, quit the sodt
Or she will scholt at you by Got!

—

New-York Theatre.—On Friday night, May 20, COOPER played *Othello* to a fashionable, and, considering the pressure of the Embargo, a full house. We have often seen him in this arduous character with admiration, but we witnessed his representation of it on Friday evening with astonishment. Othello requires a genius and an energy, a judgment and an action which cannot be found but in COOPER. Fennel *conceives* the character correctly enough, but he fails prodigiously in *execution*. Garrick, who played it once, would yield the palm to COOPER. We regret that the public does not, at present, afford sufficient encouragement to keep him in this city; for

"Take him for all in all,
"We ne'er shall look upon his like again."

[*Amer. Citizen.*

ORIGINAL POETRY.

—

[These beautiful lines were taken from the Album, kept at a public-house near Passaick Falls, New-Jersey.]

For the Pastime.

PASSAIC FALLS....*A TRADITION.*

In a wild tranquil vale fring'd with forests of green,
Where nature had fashion'd a soft sylvan scene,
The retreat of the ring-dove, the haunt of the deer,
Passaic in silence roll'd tranquil and clear.

No grandeur of prospect astonish'd the sight,
No abruptness sublime mingled awe with delight,
Here the wild flowret blossom'd—the elm proudly wav'd,
And pure was the current the green bank that lav'd.

But the spirit that rul'd in the thick tangled wood,
And deep in the gloom fix'd his murky abode;
Who lov'd the rude scene that the whirlwind deforms,
And gloried in tempests, and light'ning and storms.

All flush'd from the tumult of battle he came,
Where the *red men* encounter'd the *children of flame*,
While the yell of the war-whoop still rung in his ears,
And the fresh bleeding scalp as a trophy he bears.

Oh! deep was the horror, and fierce was the fight,
When the eyes of the white-man were shaded in night,
When by strangers invaded, by strangers destroy'd,
They ensanguin'd the fields, which their fathers enjoy'd.

Lo! the sons of the forest in terror retire,
Pale savages chase them with thunder and fire;
In vain whirls the war-club–in vain twangs the bow,
By thunder and fire are his warriors laid low.

From defeat and from carnage the fierce spirit came,
His soul was a tumult—his passions were flame,
Despair swells his breast—fury maddens his ire,
And black scowl his brows o'er his eye-balls of fire—

With a glance of disgust he the landscape survey'd,
With its fragrant wild flowrets, its wide waving shade,
Where Passaic meander'd thro' margins of green,
So transparent its waters, its surface serene.

He riv'd the green hills, the wild woods he laid low,
He turn'd the smooth stream, in rough channels to flow;
He rent the rude rock, the steep precipice gave,
And hurl'd down the chasm, the loud thundering wave.

A scene of strange ruin he scatter'd around,
Where cliffs, pil'd on cliffs, in rude majesty frown'd;
Where shades of thick horror embrown'd the dark wood,
And rainbow and mist mark'd the turbulent flood.

Countless moons have since roll'd in the long lapse of time—
Cultivation has soften'd those features sublime,
The axe of the white-man enliven'd the shade,
And dispell'd the deep gloom of the thicketted glade.

Yet the stranger still gazes with wondering eye,
On rocks rudely torn, and groves mounted on high;
Still loves on the cliffs giddy border to roam,
Where the torrent leaps headlong embosom'd in foam.

[The same Spring that covers the fields with luxuriance, inspires the Bard, and brings forth the flowers of poetry. The praises of May have been repeatedly rehearsed, but we have read nothing on the subject which surpasses these verses by one of our own poets.]

MAY,

BY THE LATE WILLIAM M. JOHNSON.

'Tis May—No more the Huntsman finds
The lingering snow behind the hill;
Her swelling bosom pregnant earth unbinds,
And love, and joy, creation fill.

Over the grassy streamlet's brink,
Young verdures peep, themselves to view;
At morn the tipsied insects sit and drink,
From flowery cups, the honied dew.

Deep crimsoned in the dyes of spring,
On every side, broad orchards rise,
Soft-waving to the breeze's balmy wing,
Like dancing lights in northern skies.

In ditties wild, devoid of thought,
The Robin, through the day, discants;
The pensive Whip-poor-will, behind the cot,
Her dirge, at evening, duly chaunts.

Beside the rushy-fringed rill,
Intent, the treacherous angler stands—
He waves the pliant rod with fatal skill,
And strings the prey with joyful hands.

Propt on his fork, her Colin stands,
Beside the Milkmaid at the cow;
The snowy streams she turns, with roguish hands,
And laughs, while Colin wipes his brow.

Queen of the months, soft-blushing May!
Forever bright, forever dear,
O, let our prayers, prolong thy little stay,
And exile winter from the year.

Life, love, and joy, to thee belong—
Then fly the storm and lucid cloud:
Thou giv'st the heavens their blue, the groves their song,
Thou com'st, and nature laughs aloud.

Let prouder swains forsake the cell,
In arts or arms to rise and shine;
I blame them not—alas! I wish them well—
But May and solitude be mine.

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